

DRYER, THOMAS J.

DRAWER 10C

CONTEMPORARIES

71.2009.085.03774



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2013

<http://archive.org/details/abrahamlincolnsctdlinc>

Abraham Lincoln's Contemporaries

Thomas J. Dryer

Excerpts from newspapers and other
sources

From the files of the
Lincoln Financial Foundation Collection



Lincoln Lore

July, 1977

Bulletin of the Louis A. Warren Lincoln Library and Museum. Mark E. Neely, Jr., Editor. Published each month by the Lincoln National Life Insurance Company, Fort Wayne, Indiana 46801.

Number 1673

Lincoln Autographed *Debates*: Samuel Long Copy

This article is the fourth in *Lincoln Lore's* series on the copies of the *Political Debates Between Hon. Abraham Lincoln and Hon. Stephen A. Douglas in the Celebrated Campaign of 1858, in Illinois* inscribed by Abraham Lincoln to his friends and political associates. Lincoln is said to have received one hundred copies of this book to give away. Harry E. Pratt's "Lincoln Autographed Debates" (*Manuscripts*, VI [Summer, 1954], 194-201) listed eighteen copies known to exist at that time. Now, Mrs. Donald Trescott, Special Collections Librarian at the Brown University Library, has written to tell us about the copy in their Lincoln collection, and it seems to be the nineteenth known copy, for it was not listed by Harry Pratt in 1954. Lincoln students and bibliophiles owe a debt to Mrs. Trescott for taking the time and trouble to describe Brown University's copy.

The copy is inscribed "To Dr. Samuel Long/with respects of/A. Lincoln." The copy came to the fine (but ironically named) McLellan Lincoln Collection at Brown through the good offices of Harry Pratt. He obtained the copy from Mrs. J.R. Kennedy. The book had previously belonged to her late husband's grandfather. Dr. Samuel Long, to whom Lincoln wrote his inscription, had one son who died young and one daughter, Annie, who married Samuel Porter Kennedy. Presumably, he was J.R. Kennedy's grandfather.

Marion Pratt, who was a thorough and knowledgeable Lincoln researcher, apparently furnished Brown with a list of the references to Dr. Samuel Long from the *Illinois State Journal*. These provide us with the rough outlines of the doctor's career. He was listed as a physician in Lincoln's home town, Springfield, by 1851. A year later he became the city's corporation physician and the city physician. In 1853, he married Elizabeth Almira Collins; they lost their son in 1856.

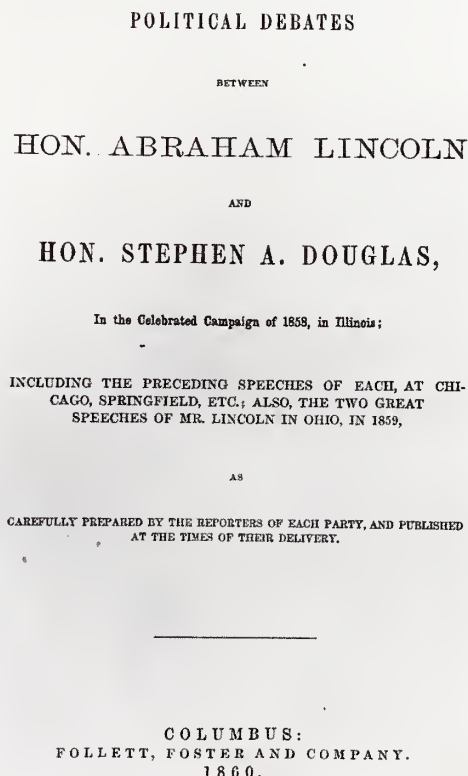
We know that Dr. Long was not the Lincolns' physician in Springfield; his connection with Lincoln was apparently political. In 1858, he was a delegate to the Illinois State Republican Convention, where he may have heard Lincoln deliver his famous "House Divided" Speech. As a member of the reception commit-

tee of that Convention, he doubtless congratulated the party's nominee for the Senate seat held by Stephen A. Douglas. Later that summer, Dr. Long was a successful candidate for the post of alderman in Springfield. At this point, his career began to take a turn for the worse. In May of 1859, he resigned as trustee of the Institution for the Deaf and Dumb at Jacksonville, Illinois. In August, he resigned his aldermanic seat and went to Texas. In September, he returned from Texas. The last reference to Dr. Long noted that he was serving as a United States Grand Juror in June of 1860. At that point, the references to Dr. Long supplied by Mrs. Pratt end.

Happily, a few other fugitive sources tell the rest of the tale. Milton H. Shutes in *Lincoln and the Doctors* (New York: Pioneer Press, 1933) claimed that "Dr. Samuel Long . . .

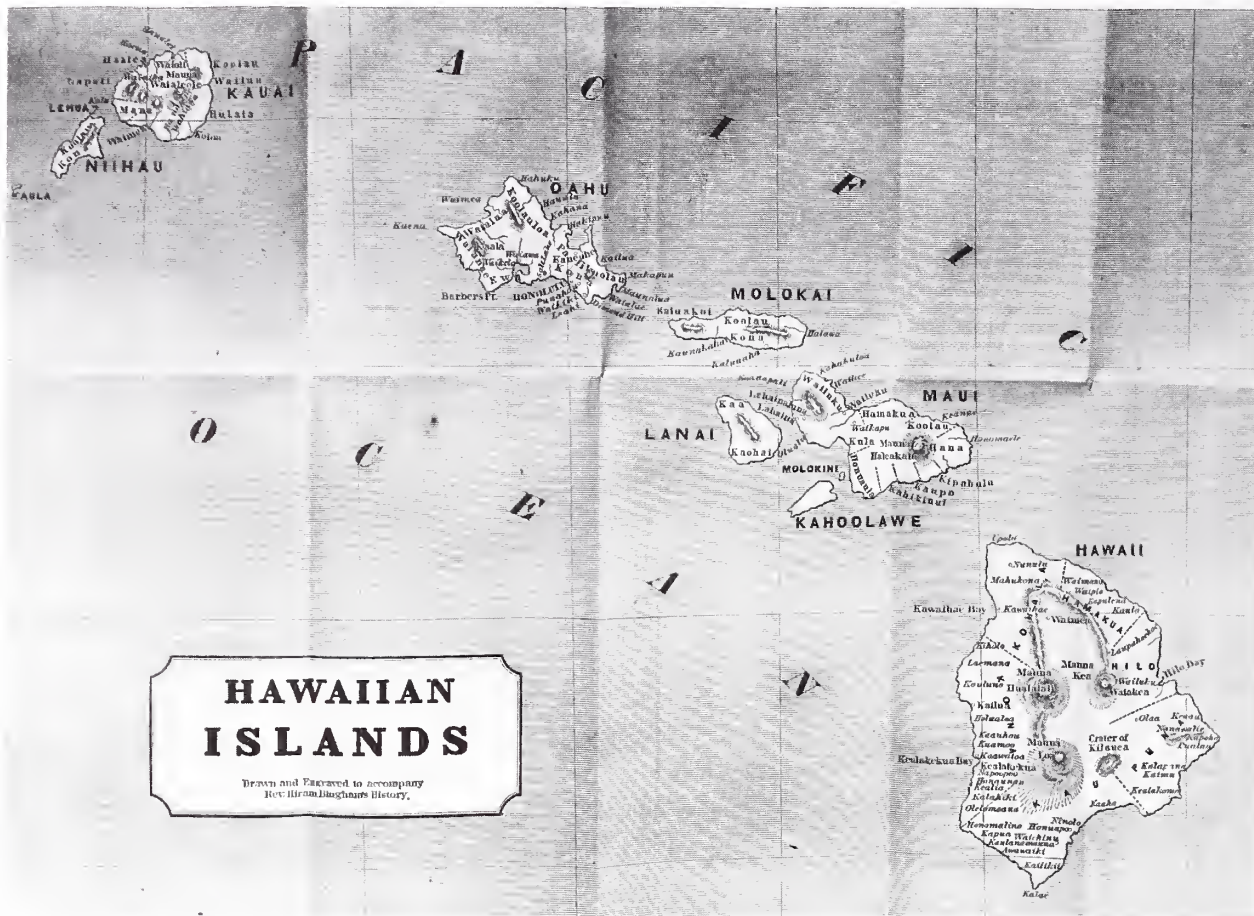
abandoned the practice of medicine when President Lincoln appointed him consul at Havana." But the post at Havana was much too important to entrust to a provincial physician from the President's home town. A center for conflicts over blockade-running, Havana would play an important part in the background of the famous *Trent* affair, the diplomatic crisis which nearly brought intervention from England on the side of the Confederacy. The consul at Havana was Robert Wilson Shufeldt, a New Yorker with sixteen years' experience in the navy, who had spent the six years immediately before the war as a merchant captain sailing from New Orleans to Havana. True, he was not a career diplomat, and the political influence of his friend, Connecticut Senator Truman Smith, on fellow Nutmegger and Secretary of the Navy Gideon Welles was the critical connection in gaining Shufeldt the consulship. Nevertheless, he was familiar with dealing with the Spanish colonial empire, he spoke Spanish fluently, and he had been a frequent visitor to Havana. Dr. Long seems to have had none of these qualifications.

Ensley Moore's article on "The Collins Family and Connections" in the *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society* for April, 1919, noted that Dr. Long served as consul to Lahaina in the Sandwich Islands, and a



From the Louis A. Warren
Lincoln Library and Museum

FIGURE 1. Title page of the published version of the Lincoln-Douglas Debates. Lincoln customarily signed the presentation copies on the flyleaf.



From the Louis A. Warren
Lincoln Library and Museum

FIGURE 2. Map of the Hawaiian Islands from Hiram Bingham's *Residence of Twenty-one Years in the Sandwich Islands* (Canandaigua, New York: H.D. Goodwin, 1855).

letter in the Library of Congress's Robert Todd Lincoln Collection confirms this and explains much about Dr. Long's later life. The Sandwich Islands, incidentally, were what we call the Hawaiian Islands today. Lahaina is on the island of Maui.

On July 15, 1861, Dr. Long wrote Secretary of State William H. Seward a long and unhappy letter from the Sandwich Islands. Long asked Seward to give his letter to President Lincoln and wrote Lincoln on the same date to make sure that he knew he was supposed to receive the letter after Seward read it. Dr. Long reminded Seward that he had accepted the post at Lahaina only because of Seward's "persuasion and influence." Lincoln, Long claimed, had promised him that he would be consul at Honolulu. "I supposed at the time," he added, "that you meant to do me a kindness, and so at your instance was persuaded to relinquish the Honolulu Consulate, for the one I now hold."

Hinting perhaps that he did not trust Seward's motives as well, Dr. Long wrote, "Mr. Lincoln, I know meant me well." Nevertheless, Long would never have accepted Seward's offer had he known the position he would occupy immediately after his arrival. Here was his plight:

On the 28th day of March I received my final instructions and passport, and left Washington for my post of duty. — I had heard of the investigations, that had taken place in Honolulu, and at this place, and supposed, when I accepted the position I occupy, that the matter was all settled satisfactorily, and that I would be permitted to come out and occupy in peace, as long as I discharged my trust faithfully and honestly, this Consulate. — But not so — I had been here a few days only over a month, when Dr. H.H. Baseley presents himself to me, as a "Special Consular Commissioner," clothed with most extraordinary powers, to

alter, modify, and change any and everything pertaining to this Consulate. — He has power to break up this Consulate effectually, and to transfer its Hospital to Honolulu. — He has power to take from my hands all patronage, so that I shall be unable to retain with me, as a friend and companion, the gentleman who came with me from home, to act as purveyor and Physician of my Consulate, and in short, the result of the investigations of the Special Commissioner will be, that he will recommend the abolition of this Consulate and of the one at Hilo, and the concentration of all governmental authority in these Islands, in the person of a Consul General to reside at Honolulu, with agencies here, and at Hilo. —

Dr. Long agreed that the reorganization would save the government money, but he was miffed to "find that Dr. Baseley's latest instructions bear date of March 30, 1861, only two days later than mine. — It does appear to me that when such a sweeping reform was intended in this Consulate, that it would have been but justice to myself, to give me notice at that time of any such intention, and then if I should conclude to come to Lahaina, it would be at my own risk." Dr. Long wanted "to give no offence in this writing," but Seward had "cut me up, root and branch." "I do not wish to remain here," he said flatly, "when this Consulate is bereft of all patronage, and made an appendage of the Honolulu Consulate." Long's request was simple: he wanted the Honolulu Consulate, the object of his "first wishes."

Dr. Long put heavy pressure on Secretary of State Seward. He reminded the Secretary that Lincoln "knows me well, and has known me long." He pointed out that the three thousand dollars he spent from his own funds to reach the Sandwich Islands and establish housekeeping had ruined him "pecuniarily." Moreover, the healthfulness of the climate in Honolulu



From the Louis A. Warren
Lincoln Library and Museum

FIGURE 3. Secretary of the State William H. Seward.

was fully as good as that on the rest of the Sandwich Islands, and it was apparently for the sake of his health that he had sought a tropical post. Doubtless, Dr. Long's concern about his health explains much. Failing health probably led him to resign his various positions of public responsibility in Illinois in 1859. Climate probably led him to Texas, and politics probably led him right back to Illinois, for Texas in 1860 was no place for a staunch Republican like Dr. Long. "Take into consideration," Long concluded, "the distance I am from my home, my pecuniary situation, and the condition of my family which is with me, and remember that you alone, are the cause of my being thus situated, and if you have any 'bowels of mercy' about you, I shall receive a favorable answer to my request."

Dr. Long's note to Lincoln was much shorter and considerably less intemperate in tone. He begged "that if I have any hold in your esteem, or place in your kind feelings, as you long ago, unsolicited, assured me I had, you will grant the request I have made to you." He reminded Lincoln of his poor

health: "I find the climate of these Islands very beneficial to my health, and if I can remain here several years, I have every assurance to believe that I will get well." He ended his plea with "all the earnestness of a drowning man, who catches at every straw floating by."

We do not know the resolution of Dr. Long's difficulties, but it is not hard to guess that his plea fell on deaf ears. In the first place, the arguments he used for the move to Honolulu were also circumstances which indicated that he would have little choice in the matter should Seward stick by his choice for Honolulu. Financially pressed and needing a tropical climate, Dr. Long was in no position to quit and go home if he were not offered the Honolulu post. In the second place, Dr. Long was up against another solid Lincoln friend in Hawaii.

The Honolulu post was held by Thomas J. Dryer, a journalist from Oregon. When he swung the Portland *Oregonian* into the Republican camp in 1859, he gained enough influence in the party to be made a Lincoln elector in 1860. Since he actually carried the tally of Oregon's vote to Washington for the official count, he was present in Washington to seek an office just at the time Lincoln was forming his new government. He took the Hawaii post when it was offered, but for a time the Senate blocked his confirmation because of his rumored fondness for strong drink. It took the efforts of Oregon Senator Edward D. Baker to get Dryer's confirmation through the Senate, and Baker had to pledge his "sacred honor" that the charge that Dryer was intemperate was untrue. The Senate then confirmed him.

Dr. Long was doubtless an old friend of Abraham Lincoln's, but Lincoln had few friends of longer standing than Edward D. Baker. Mainstays of the Whig party in central Illinois back in the 1840s, Lincoln and Baker were close enough associates that Lincoln named his son Eddie after Baker. Baker was Dryer's sponsor for the Hawaii job, and it is doubtful that President Lincoln would do anything to upset his administration of the Hawaiian consulate even for the sake of another friend from Illinois. In fact, Lincoln passed Long over for another Oregonian in 1863, when the Honolulu post was upgraded to the level of minister resident. Lincoln appointed Dr. James McBride, an Oregon physician, farmer, and Republican stalwart.

Brown University's historic presentation copy of the *Debates* is an artifact which suggests a fascinating story of friendship and politics, a story which stretches all the way from central Illinois to the islands of the Pacific. Those who are not collectors or who are not browsers in museums and rare book libraries often are puzzled at others' interest in fly-specked and damp-stained copies of books with scribbled signatures in them. Most often, of course, it is not the objects themselves but the tales of far-flung adventures suggested by the objects which cause the fascination. The appeal of such stories, when they are known, proves hard to resist.

Olivia Coolidge's Lincoln Biography for Young Adults

If you have been searching recently for good high school graduation presents, or if you have a teenager around the house idled by summer unemployment, Olivia Coolidge has provided one solution to your problems. She has finished a two-volume biography of Abraham Lincoln, which, though written for young readers, will not insult their intelligence or show them American history through rose-colored glasses. The first volume, called *The Apprenticeship of Abraham Lincoln*, was published by Charles Scribner's Sons in 1974. The second volume, entitled *The Statesmanship of Abraham Lincoln*, was published by Scribner's last year. Each volume is about 230 pages in length, attractively printed, and unburdened by scholarly apparatus like footnotes which can scare a younger reader away.

Olivia Coolidge is the author of more than twenty-five books for young readers, many of them biographies. Born in London, she graduated from Oxford University, taught English in Boston's Winsor School, and became a professional writer. Classical civilization has been one of her major interests since her original training at Oxford, but she has also written books on Winston Churchill, Thomas Paine, Edith Wharton, Eugene O'Neill, and Gandhi. She considered



Mission Seminary at Lahainaluna Page 561

From the Louis A. Warren
Lincoln Library and Museum

FIGURE 4. Detail of a view of Lahainaluna from Hiram Bingham's memoir.

